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LANDSCAPE SUMMARY NOTE – LAND OFF DISS LAWNS, DISS, NORFOLK

The Site

The Site is located within the centre of the town of Diss in Norfolk, situated between Shelfanger Road (B1077) to the west and Mount Street to the east. The Site is irregular in shape and occupies an approximate area of 1.45 hectares.

The Site is comprised of a small area of an overall larger area of pasture (known locally as The Lawns or Parish Fields), with numerous large, mature trees located across the Site.

The Site is not publicly accessible and has residential dwellings lying along its western and northern boundaries, with the Diss Health Centre and associated car park lying to the immediate south of the Site.

The Proposals

The Site proposals comprise the creation of a new residential development within the western section of The Lawns, consisting of bungalows with associated car parking and landscaped areas. The eastern part of the Site is proposed to be retained as public open space with the creation of pedestrian paths, and with the retention of the existing vegetation structure.

The main access point into the Site is proposed from Shelfanger Road in the south-western corner of the Site, with additional pedestrian access points linking Shelfanger Road to the north-western corner of the Site and Mount Street to the proposed public open space to the east.

Landscape Character

The Site lies within the South Norfolk and High Suffolk Claylands National Character Area (NCA), and at a local level, it has been placed within the associated Waveney Rural River Valley Landscape Character Area (LCA), which is an expression of the Rural River Valley Landscape Character Type (LCT).

The Rural River Valley Landscape LCT is broadly characterised by its glacial valley landform and floodplains. The Site is not considered to be representative of this LCT on account of its urban location, although it could be considered to be more representative of the Waveney Rural River

Valley LCA, which describes the pastoral character of the area and the market town character of Diss.

The Site lies within the northern section of the town of Diss, and lies within the Diss Conservation Area. The surrounding townscape is characterised by a mixture of building ages, styles and uses, including residential, commercial and industrial. The introduction of the modern Health Centre to the immediate south of the Site, along with the two car parks detracts from the townscape of Listed Buildings particularly along Mount Street and St Nicholas Street to the east and south of the Site.

The Site is characterised by its pastoral nature, but also by the presence of the settlement in particular along the Site's western, northern and eastern boundaries, and to a lesser extent along the Site's southern boundary. The presence of built form is a prominent feature along sections of the Site boundaries and therefore the Site displays a settlement character and cannot be considered an intact, tranquil landscape.

Visual Environment

Views of the Site are predominantly confined to the immediate context of the residents and users of Mount Street, Shelfanger Road and Sunnyside, along with users of the car park and to a lesser extent the Health Centre to the south.

Due to the location of the Site within an existing townscape, views beyond the immediate adjacent streets are considered unlikely.

It is also possible that views of the Site are available from Public Footpath FP33 to the south of the car park within the town. However, views from the wider network of Public Rights of Way beyond the settlement edge are considered highly unlikely on account of the distance from the Site, the intervening vegetation and the position of the Site within an already built up townscape.

Recommendations

- Retain and enhance all existing boundary vegetation to maintain strong habitat connections and to help visually contain the Site;
- Retain existing mature trees within the Site where possible, and plant additional trees, within the adjacent Lawns area, to ecologically enhance this area and to help visually contain the Site;
- Consider maintaining views of the eastern section of The Lawns from Mount Street;
- Include good quality tree, hedgerow and shrub planting within the development to help integrate the development into the receiving environment, and
- Promote the use of locally native plant species, where appropriate, to ensure that the proposals are in keeping with the character of the Site, its setting and the wider townscape context.

Summary and Conclusions

Whilst the proposals will result in a degree of change to that which currently exists, it is anticipated that this change could be accommodated within this context.

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